



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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On the one-year anniversary of Jimmy Lai's imprisonment by Chinese authorities in Hong Kong

WASHINGTON—Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), the Ranking Member of the Congressional-Executive Commission on China and Co-chair of the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission, today issued the following statement on the one-year anniversary of Jimmy Lai's imprisonment by Chinese authorities in Hong Kong:

“One year ago today, Mr. Jimmy Lai—the renowned founder of Apple Daily and brave Beijing critic—was taken into custody and denied bail by Hong Kong authorities acting at the apparent behest of the Chinese Communist Party.

“His crime: practicing freedom of expression—the very principle that had made Hong Kong one of the most vibrant and free metropolises of the world in the not-too-distant past.

“That version of Hong Kong that the world remembers is now gone.

“Instead, under a so-called ‘national security law,’ Beijing now can punish anything it considers remotely resembling the vague crimes of ‘secession,’ ‘subversion,’ ‘terrorism’ and ‘collusion with foreign forces’ with penalties up to life imprisonment.

“According to [Joanna Chiu](#), a former Hong Kong-based journalist who testified before the Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission this past October, international engagement—including with the United Nations or foreign governments—can now be criminalized as ‘collusion with foreign forces.’

“What Beijing should remember, however, is that the world is watching. We cannot forget the brave Hong Kong activists such as Mr. Lai, who is jailed because of his fight for freedom of the press.

“A devout Catholic, dealing with health issues at 73 years of age, he is suffering through his personal Purgatory.

“While he was imprisoned, the Apple Daily—the most prominent remaining independent pro-democracy newspaper—was shut down forcibly by the authorities over the summer.

“The indelible images showing hundreds of police officers raiding the Apple Daily's press room—an outrageous act intended to intimidate dissidents and pro-democracy advocates—cannot be erased from the minds of Hong Kong's democracy supporters, or those of us abroad who viewed them.

“But the images of hundreds of supporters gathered outside Apple Daily's building on June 24, 2021—its last day of publication—waving mobile phone lights while journalists came out onto the balcony and responded by waving their own lighted phones, gave the world a sense of hope. If you have seen even a glimpse of what freedom is like, you can never erase that image either.

“Jimmy stands for something larger than just himself. There are hundreds of other ‘Jimmy Lais’ who are determined to stand for freedom.

“I chaired a hearing of the bipartisan [Tom Lantos Human Rights Commission](#) on October 14 of this year on *the State of Civil and Political Rights in Hong Kong*.

“We learned that Hong Kong reportedly has more journalists in jail per capita than any other place on earth.

“We cannot forget them either, and we should say their names: Edmund Wan You-sing, Ryan Law, Cheung Kim Hung, Chan Pui-man, Lam Man Chung, Fung Wai Kong, Yeung Ching-kee, and Gweyneth Ho.

“All of these brave journalists continue to be imprisoned, while others have been released on bail awaiting trial. They, and many others like them, cannot be erased from our memories.

“We will continue to keep Jimmy in our prayers and press for his release and that of all other Hong Kong journalists and democracy advocates unjustly imprisoned.”

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